

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-4 and 6-10 remain in the application. Claim 5 has been canceled. All of the remaining claims have been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, the elimination of the numeric references is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability. Independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 5 and to define the invention more clearly. Independent claim 7 has been amended significantly to define the invention more clearly.

Original claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Sakaguchi, U.S. Patent No. 6,371,808. The Examiner identified elements of the Sakaguchi connector that were considered to be equivalent to the elements and process steps recited in the original claims.

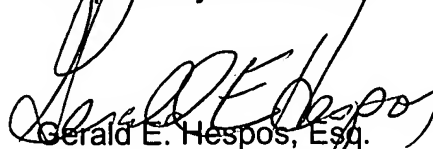
Sakaguchi has a holding portion that surrounds and engages terminal fittings. No portion of the Sakaguchi terminal fittings project beyond the longitudinal ends of the holder of Sakaguchi. Wires are connected to the terminal fittings and project beyond the holder and through a mold cavity. Resin then is injected into the mold cavity and surrounds the wires. Sakaguchi does not support any part of the flexible wires projecting through the mold cavity. Hence, Sakaguchi would suffer from exactly the problems that were identified and described in the subject application. In particular, forces of the resin flowing into the cavity would cause the unsupported wires to move, thereby altering positions of the wires. The terminal fittings would be unaffected by the molding process because no part of the terminal fitting is in the mold

cavity. Additionally Sakaguchi supports the holder at a plurality of locations around the connector. In particular, FIG. 6 of Sakaguchi shows plural support pins 28c, at the lower end of the holder and the housing cavity 27a. Removal of the support pins 28c at the end of the molding process would appear to leave parts of the wires exposed (see FIG. 3). It is submitted that Sakaguchi is directed to an entirely different type of connector and an entirely different method than the invention defined by the amended claims herein. Furthermore, nothing in Sakaguchi would motivate the skilled artisan to move from the Sakaguchi connector and method toward the claimed invention. In fact, Sakaguchi suffers from exactly the same problems as the admitted prior art. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4-7, 9 and 10 are not taught or suggested by Sakaguchi.

Claims 3 and 8 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Sakaguchi in view of Fukatsu et al. The Fukatsu et al. reference relates only to two-color molding and does not overcome the deficiencies of Sakaguchi as explained above.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact the applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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